

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 209 687

CS 503 552

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TITLE Negotiating Close Friendship: The Dialectic of
Conjunctive Freedoms.
PUB DATE May 81
NOTE 36p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
International Communication Association (Minneapolis,
MN, May 21-25, 1981).
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Affiliation Need; Behavioral Science Research;
*Behavior Patterns; *Communication (Thought
Transfer); *Communication Research; *Friendship;
Interpersonal Competence; *Social Exchange Theory
IDENTIFIERS *Dependency (Personality); *Independent Behavior

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to investigate the practical management of interactions sustaining close friendships. Ten pairs of close friends were interviewed individually on two occasions and together on a third occasion. An interpretive analysis of subjects' remarks identified a dialectical principle governing the communicative organization of friendship. The dialectic of the freedom to be independent/freedom to be dependent conceptualizes the patterns of availability and mutual support in a close friendship. Basically, while each person is free to pursue individual interests apart from the other and without the friend's interference or help, each retains the liberty to rely on the other for help. In granting each other a combination of these two freedoms, the individuals cocreate a basis for patterns of interaction in their relationship that may curtail their individual liberties. This being so, the appropriate enactment of either type of communicative behavior within a relationship must be continually, though not always explicitly, renegotiated. (RL)

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NEGOTIATING CLOSE FRIENDSHIP:
THE DIALECTIC OF CONJUNCTIVE FREEDOMS

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CS333552

Over the course of an interpersonal relationship, some communicative acts create contexts to which subsequent communicative acts must adapt (Bateson, 1972). The contexts created by certain acts may stand unintentionally in opposition to those created by other acts. For instance, Bochner (in press, p. 192) concluded his extensive review of the functions of communication in interpersonal bonding by pointing out

...several ways in which talk may inhibit what it exhibits--expressiveness mandating protectiveness, revealing necessitating concealing, openness petitioning discretion, weakness used to dominate, freedom as a constraint.

Indeed, the potential oppositions produced by the functioning of communication places the experience of contradiction at the center of relational life.

The present research formulates these issues dialectically by assuming that internal oppositions and antagonistic tendencies inhere in the structure of close interpersonal relationships. A dialectical perspective presupposes that the development of a relationship requires participants to manage the communicative requirements of simultaneously polar qualities, e.g., the extent of mutuality versus individuality in friendship or marriage. If the relational partners emphasize one quality to the neglect of the other, the relationship may be disrupted or become "troubled." Moreover, in many cases the persistence of one aspect of a relationship is contingent upon the presence of a contradictory aspect. The existence of these contravening demands, however, means that certain tensions are common in relationships. These tensions

constitute subtle and covert dilemmas which must be managed effectively if a relationship is to flourish.

For example, Askham (1976) specifies identity-maintenance and stability-maintenance as two essential functions of marriage in our culture. According to Askham, a sense of identity requires wide-ranging conversation with others, a degree of privacy or independence and the possibility of new experiences and change for each individual. In contrast, a sense of stability necessitates limiting many of these activities. Askham observes

A problem is thus created, for it appears to be impossible for one intimate relationship (the kind that marriage often is in our society) to enable the individuals involved to create for themselves a sense of stability and identity. How, therefore, do people go about managing such a relationship? Do they, for example, stress one activity to the exclusion of the other, or do they redefine the marriage and broaden the relationship so that both are possible? (1976, p. 539;

The utility of formulating this problem in dialectical terms can be seen by contrasting Askham's analysis with Knapp's (1978) discussion of integrating and differentiating, processes which are respectively equivalent to Askham's stability and identity. Knapp views integrating as a stage in a relationship's "coming together" and differentiating as a stage in "coming apart." Thus, for Knapp each process is an earmark of either relational growth or decay. Askham, on the other hand, argues that the need for stability and the need for identity are present at all stages of development and that participants must find ways to mute the disruptive potential

of these contradictory requirements throughout the course of their relationship.

One advantage of the dialectical view is its assumption that contradictions not only persist in interpersonal life but are also essential to the development of close interpersonal bonds (Wozniak, 1975; Lawler, 1975). This assumption underpins Henry's (1965) provocative analysis of family communication in his highly regarded Pathways to Madness. A "dialectical imagination" also comprises Brown's (1959) principal corrective for deficiencies in Freudian theory. Yet there have been few attempts to demonstrate dialectical principles in research on interpersonal relationships. Accordingly, the research reported in this paper constitutes an initial attempt to analyze the communicative experiences of close friendship from a dialectical perspective.

Freedom and Constraint

A dialectical pair that may be central to studying relationships is freedom and constraint. Several scholars have noted that individuals experience freedom paradoxically in relation to the limitations imposed by other people (Davis, 1973; Wolff, 1950; Becker, 1973; Lifton, 1970). In his evaluation of interpersonal freedom Oppenheim states

There is of course no such thing as freedom in the interpersonal sense. However, once it is clearly understood that we are dealing with specific interaction relationships, we may safely use 'a freedom' as a shorthand expression for: being free to do something with respect to someone else (1960, p. 373).

The present conception of interpersonal freedoms is consistent with Oppenheim's thinking.

As ideal types of relationships marriage and friendship differ fundamentally in their potential for interpersonal freedom.² On the one hand, marriage is a publicly sanctioned legal bond. It requires court action to dissolve a marriage. As a result, Haley (1963) describes the dilemma potentially facing spouses as, "Now that they are married are they staying together because they wish to or because they must?" (p. 119).

This question, however, does not necessarily apply to a friendship bond as it is a matter of personal choice whether or not two individuals remain friends. For no public contracts or ceremonies guarantee the individuals' continued commitment to each other in our culture (Brain, 1976; Paine, 1969; Naegele, 1958). This essentially voluntary nature of friendship must be recognized as an important exigency affecting the communication of friends. The goal of this research, therefore, was to investigate the practical management of freedom/constraint in the interaction sustaining close friendship.

To summarize, this study reflects five assumptions. (1) Much of relational life is inherently contradictory (Bochner, in press). (2) Communication both creates and responds to the contradictory requirements of relationships. (3) A dialectical approach has the advantage of assuming that contradiction is essential to development (Wozniak, 1975; Lawler, 1975). (4) There are some (though not nearly enough) examples in the literature of how dialectical analysis provides understanding of relational processes; and (5) a focal

dialectical pair for studying relationships is freedom/constraint. Thus, the research reported here had two specific goals: (1) to provide a demonstration of a dialectical analysis; and (2) to further our understanding of how close friends manage their interaction. We attempted to achieve these purposes by examining the expressions of close friends about the communicative experiences of their friendship.

PROCEDURES

This research focuses on intensive case studies based on open-ended interviews. Ten friendship pairs were interviewed--four pairs of female friends, four pairs of male friends and two pairs of cross-sex friends.

All of the friendship pairs that were interviewed in this study met seven requirements: (1) subjects had to be individuals that the investigator did not know personally. (2) Subjects had to think of each other as "close friends." Their principal bond had to be one of friendship, not that of siblings, spouses, co-workers, lovers or fiances. (3) Subjects had to have been close friends for at least two years. It was surmised that such friendships would be less threatened by intensive study than beginning ones. Further, it was expected that the interaction patterns of persisting close friendships would be more established and recognizable and thereby susceptible to examination than those of incipient friendships. The data from friendships of longer duration are likely to be more relevant to developmental issues. (4) Subjects had to spend time with each other voluntarily outside of

settings where they were required to interact, e.g. work or school. This requirement was in accordance with theoretical conceptions of the voluntary character of friendship (Naegele, 1958; Paine, 1969). (5) Subjects had to be between twenty and twenty-nine years of age inclusive. This age limit was not arbitrary. As much age uniformity as possible was desired in the sample, and it also was to be an age group that had "tasted life" to some degree. (6) Potential subjects had to appear interested and involved in close friendship.³ (7) Finally, subjects had to be sufficiently articulate to function well in an open-ended interview setting.⁴

The questions comprising the interview protocols were based on a theory of friendship developed by the researcher (Rawlins, 1979) and on Bolton's (1959) research on courtship.⁵ Both friends were interviewed individually on two occasions and together on a third occasion. All of the interviews were tape-recorded. The questions posed in this exploratory investigation reflected some of the more essential components of the theory, e.g. key incidents in the development of the friendships, the nature and extent of commitment and the presence of norms of propriety. The reason for conducting separate interviews was to ascertain how the friends responded individually to questions about their relationship. The two friends' accounts could then be compared for cross-validation of their comments. Thus the data analyzed in this study were drawn from ten sets of tape recordings. Each set corresponded to a given friendship and included four individual interviews and one dyadic interview with each pair.

ANALYSIS

A purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of the practical organization of interactions which sustain close friendships. Therefore, the analysis centered on identifying the informal relational logic(s) that inhered in these subjects' observations. This level of analysis is contrasted with that of someone desiring to draw conclusions regarding microscopic linguistic aspects of the actual discourse itself (Mathiot, 1978).

Every reference to interaction within each friendship was extracted and inscribed separately on index cards. These references were extricated as coherent wholes, i.e. some were single sentence responses to questions while others were more extended utterances covering a particular issue.⁶

The attempt was made to construe each person's statements according to the meaning that the actor's situation had for him/her. Such an interpretive approach acknowledges that the meaning of an interaction for the actor is in itself an interpretation of a negotiated, lived context (Taylor, 1977). Although it is naive to presume too much knowledge of any other person's interpretations, a preliminary data analysis had provided valuable, supplemental information for making sense of the subjects' descriptions. This previous analysis of the entire corpus of interview data included the methodical identification and indexing of themes and references to third parties as well as the construction of a history of each friendship comprised of the subjects' comments.⁷ The result was a conception of each relationship as an overarching context for the friends' interaction. This information was derived from both

subjects' descriptions of their behavior in the friendship. In other words, the prominence of certain events and the interrelationship of various themes were based upon both parties' references to them at several points in the interviews. This familiarity with the circumstances and themes that may be alluded to in a remark fostered sensitivity to each relationship as a contextual factor in interpreting an individual's statements.

These research results are reported with an important qualification, however. There were no rigorous rules that necessarily led to the dialectic reported below. Nor was any formal codification undertaken. As a result, there is a conspicuous absence of quantificational representations of the data and the statistical inferences that normally accompany quantification. To impose the least possible structure upon the data, the empirical categories were derived from the archive at hand. Their defining characteristics were determined by the content of the subjects' actual statements, and their interrelationships were specified by an assessment of the configurations of the categories in the friendships.

In investigating the subjects' statements, predetermined algorithms were avoided because certain dialectical assumptions guided the examination of the data. First, dialectical reasoning is not formal; it embodies a rejection of the "taxonomic mode of logic in favor of holism" (Bali, 1979, p. 787). Accordingly, the categorization of the data was treated as a fluid process; no classification of the comments was presumed to be permanent or unambiguous. Rather, each category derived its meaning and import from its relationship to all of the others, an interconnection that was subject to change as the groupings were sorted and

realigned. Moreover, any given statement might evince characteristics justifying its simultaneous inclusion in more than one category.

Second, the ubiquity of contradiction in social living was assumed. The presence of contradictory tendencies in the subjects' remarks was not viewed as something to be explained away but as a basis for constructing explanations. Accepting this assumption fostered what Hegel (1966, p. 68) called the ability "to recognize in what seems conflicting and inherently antagonistic the presence of mutually necessary moments." Thus, evidence of dialectical constraints, apparently incompatible requirements, was sought in the discourse being studied.

The interpretation of the archive of index cards proceeded in the following manner. First, the cards were arranged within each friendship according to their occurrence in the individual interviews. Then the collections of cards were arrayed in an arbitrary sequence. Repeated readings of this archive resulted in a familiarity with the body of discourse as a totality.

Next, the cards were sorted according to their similarity in content. In many instances use of the same words and phrases provided a basis for classification, e.g. literal reference, to sensitivity, vulnerability, expressing feelings, being apart, trust, etc.. Following Lofland's (1976) advice in studying other comments, however, the questions would arise, "What is generic about this statement? What abstract features does it share with other observations?" (Lofland, 1976). Examples of such comments were utterances that revealed the depth or breadth of the friends' interaction but never used those precise words in the description, or remarks

alluding to the fact that the way something was said often was more important than what was said, etc..

After sorting the cards, each category was examined in detail to ensure that it was as refined as possible. Any remark which upon closer inspection did not seem to pertain to the category was studied to determine if it belonged in another grouping or if it constituted its own.

Once the categories were established, they were labelled according to a particularly synoptic phrase occurring in the statements comprising each category. This facilitated the process of studying the relationships among the groupings.

The data analysis then involved arranging and rearranging the classifications in different orders and clusters in an attempt to discover an implicit informal logic that could account for the relationship among the seemingly opposing as well as connected categories. Thus, clusters of categories were continuously being juxtaposed with other groupings. At different points in the analysis, the apparent contradictions among various conglomerates of related categories were reconciled in terms of two incipient dialectical structures.

As the premises of the two dialectical principles emerged, the text was examined for evidence of how they operated in the subjects' own words. This is to say, a vague idea developed of two informal logics that might account for many of the relationships among the categories of remarks, followed by a more concentrated exploration of the verbal manifestations of these dialectics. There was therefore an unformulizable yet interactive series

of moves from the concrete to the conceptual level and back again, a combination of induction and deduction that resulted in the identification and crystallization of two dialectical principles. Only one of these dialectics will be reported here due to space limitations.⁸

The dialectic of the freedom to be independent/freedom to be dependent is presented below as a conceptual structure that informs people's treatment of each other in close relationships and is reflected in their relational practices. This principle constitutes an informal relational logic underlying what ideally/typically should and should not be done and said by close friends.

This coherence identified in the subjects' statements may or may not consciously inform the friends' actions. In reporting this principle, the attempt is made to render their behavior sensible without schematizing it. This is an attempt to place what has been discovered about the communication of friends within an intelligible frame (Geertz, 1973).

The unaltered statements of the subjects are included throughout the following sections both to support the arguments advanced and to elucidate essential points empirically.⁹ These quotations should not be taken as proof in the sense of verifying the concepts. Rather, since the principles were developed through the systematic investigation of the subjects' remarks, it is appropriate to use as much of the text as possible to demonstrate how the principle operates.

THE DIALECTIC OF CONJUNCTIVE FREEDOMS: THE FREEDOM TO BE INDEPENDENT AND THE FREEDOM TO BE DEPENDENT

The ties that bind friends are difficult to unravel. Since

an essential aspect of friendship is its voluntary nature, no public contracts or ceremonies guarantee the individuals' continued commitment to each other (Naegele, 1953; Paine, 1969). These subjects' statements revealed, however, that the ongoing negotiation and enactment of two contradictory personal freedoms operated to maintain their close friendships.

Let us consider each. First, in an established friendship self must be able to grant the other freedom to behave in whatever manner the other deems appropriate in conducting his/her life as long as there is no resulting hurt to self. Simultaneously, the other must allow self similar freedom. This license is termed the freedom to be independent of another. Second, self grants to the other the privilege of relying upon and calling on self for personal needs, regardless of the circumstances. In short, self also offers other the freedom to be dependent. Likewise, self must feel free to depend upon the other.

A working synthesis of these two freedoms is fundamental for maintaining a close friendship bond. For in order to experience autonomy that is not isolation or loneliness, self has to feel able to depend on someone else if the need arises and thus, not be compelled to be independent. Moreover, in order to preserve one's dignity as an individual while relying on another, self has to feel that such dependence is a matter of choice instead of coercion. Close friends reconcile these contrary, albeit interlaced, requirements through the achievement of the following mutual, though frequently tacit, understanding. While each person is free to pursue individual goals and interests separate from the other and without the friend's interference or help, each retains the

liberty to call on the other for assistance, should it be necessary. In this way both parties to the friendship negotiate their freedom to be independent individuals as well as their freedom to depend upon each other. And the mutually negotiated admixture of these liberties provides a basis for preserving close friendship.

Despite the individuals' attempts to achieve a jointly satisfying balance of these freedoms, they are likely to spawn options for behaving that are in continuous opposition within the relationship. Behavior that affirms one person's freedom to be independent may restrict the other's freedom to be dependent; likewise, exercising one's freedom to be dependent may constrain the other's option to be independent. Since dependence and independence are both patterns of relationship, the extent to which a given person is free to depend upon or to be independent of another is subject to ongoing co-creation. For example, when friends are apart, they assert their freedom to be independent of one another. If such a separation lasts too long or occurs at crucial moments, it may threaten the friends' freedom to be dependent upon each other. Indeed, it is difficult to experience certain forms of dependency when separated by time and distance.

In contrast, when self really needs a friend and the friend is there, self's freedom to be dependent is gratefully realized. As folk wisdom would have it, "A friend in need is a friend indeed." But if the dependency becomes too consuming of the other for whatever reason, this reliance curtails the other's freedom to be independent because the other must be available to respond to self's needs. Moreover, the other's freedom to be dependent on self may be limited by self's extreme reliance on other.

The following discussion describes each freedom as it was portrayed in the subjects' comments. Then, statements are examined that indicate how this combination of contrasting freedoms functions communicatively to maintain the friendships studied. Of course, there may be considerable variance among close friendships regarding patterns of enacting these liberties. This being so, the discussion next addresses the freedom to be independent within a friendship limiting the individuals' freedom to be dependent and the converse contingency of excessive dependency restricting independent action. Nevertheless, no one outside of a relationship can specify what constitutes a functional composite of these liberties; it must be negotiated by the friends themselves. The section closes with an overview of the options for self and other that are entailed by these contradictory freedoms and the corruptions that are possible, given the cardinal importance of personal choice in close friendship.

Freedom To Be Independent

The freedom to be independent presupposes self's volition in acting autonomously and other's option to concede or impede this privilege. Thus, this liberty involves choices for self and other. The ideal/typical practice allows self the freedom to act without considering the other, and it permits other the freedom to leave self alone if self chooses to act autonomously.

Respecting a friend's freedom to be independent is not always easy. But according to Dave, it has been essential to his friendship

And even the friendship with him, why it's lasted is that the most, the hardest things to do for someone who you are a friend with or someone that you love is to let them alone so they can hurt themselves if it's necessary, or do what they want to do. But it's hard for a person who cares for another one to let them do something that they know is going to hurt them, but not interfere, because I know every person has to grow and experience it for themselves.

In this case interfering with the other person's actions would be violating the other's freedom to be independent. An individual must elect to be dependent, and the other must wait for that choice. A possible reason why close friendship is difficult to maintain resides in this elusive quality of the freedom to be independent in a friendship. Often we think that, behaviorally, there is little difference between caring and not caring for another if in both cases an individual does not take action when someone might be hurting him/herself. Yet, in either case (caring or not caring for another) it must be presumed that the degree of one's inaction would be relative to the certainty and magnitude of the imminent hurt awaiting the other person. And in more quotidian cases the distinction lies in each friend's awareness that self is free and responsible for self's own actions but that the consequences of the actions, be they positive or negative, may be readily shared with a friend. In other words, what makes granting and exercising the freedom to be independent so essential in close friendship is the fact that it is negotiated in conjunction with the freedom to be dependent.

Freedom To Be Dependent

As in the case of the liberty just considered, the freedom to be dependent presupposes that self has a choice whether or not to rely on other and that other retains the option of granting or withholding this prerogative. The consummate enactment of this privilege accords self the freedom to rely on another for help and/or support irrespective of the situation; the other, in turn, preserves the freedom to provide this assistance.

Obviously, not everyone permits another such reliance; it is something established over the course of a friendship as in the case of Dave and Ed that Dave describes below

Just the same way that he knows he can come to me when he wants to. It's not something that you have to say. It's coming from your past actions and from just the way you treat the person. Like you know yourself right now that there's certain people, let's say if you had a problem, you could go to right away. Where there's others, even though you are friends with them, you wouldn't feel as free to go to that person or as ready to speak openly with that person where he knows he can with me. It's not something where I have to say, 'Well you know Ed, if you have a problem you can come to me 'cause I'll help you out.' It's something he knows already from past experience. It's not something that you have to constantly reaffirm all the time.

This utterance is intriguing because it bears on the potential of the freedom to be dependent for undergirding friendships while simultaneously making them fragile. Simply stated, it can be difficult for friends to know whether a given pattern of behavior

which they are enacting will constitute an affirmation or a weakening of their friendship. The friendship discussed in the previous quotation has a history of mutual dependence. As a result, these friends construe time spent apart as yet another instance of exercising their freedom to be independent.

Still, in any friendship time apart can be interpreted either as an assertion of the friends' faith in their bond or the possible beginning of a new period of separateness that is antithetical to preserving the friendship. During the period of separation, there is really no way of telling exactly which is the case, except by renewing contact. In affirming the friendship, time spent away from a friend can be a period of pursuing one's own projects, buttressed by the knowledge of having a dependable friend. Such a separation therefore constitutes an expression of one's freedom to be independent as well as one's freedom to be dependent on the other. Remarks Dave

Even though at certain times I might not have seen him for three months at a time, we were still friends and I knew I could call him and he knew he could call me, and that's when something was important because we knew each other so well we just had an understanding of what the other person needs.

For these subjects it is knowing that one can count on another that removes the negative connotations resulting from extended periods of no contact. And the intangible quality of this freedom is further evidenced by the fact that the one may never even have to redeem dependence on the other. Carol noted

I didn't have to ask him for anything. Oh, I know what really made us think that we were friends: not that I didn't have to ask him, but I always knew I could. I could ask him.

Freedom To Be Independent/Freedom To Be Dependent: A Functional Synthesis

The friends interviewed discussed numerous aspects of their relationships. The complementary operation of the tandem freedoms just described, however, was evident in many of their comments. In responding to a question regarding the effect of separation on his friendship, Dave said

I don't think it really had bad effects on it. I think, if anything, it had a good effect on it. Because although I was as I said jealous of it, I was aware that although he was going through doing these kinds of things and doing what he wanted to do, if he was happy then it would make me happy. Although I didn't feel happy at that time, I knew that he would straighten himself out and decide on what he wanted to do. And because I did let him do what he wanted and because I didn't like try to constantly lecture to him and announce things to him and y.k. pontificate, he respected me. And it made the friendship even deeper because he felt then that I cared enough about him to let him make his mistakes but then to be around later if he needed any help to pick up the pieces. At least three items are noteworthy in this quotation. First, the speaker is conscious of allowing the other to be separate from him and of not trying to limit his freedom in any way, i.e. he grants his friend the freedom to be independent. Next, he acknowledges

that the freedom of the other elicited complex feelings from him. He was jealous of the other's opportunities and not particularly happy about the other's behavior. Nevertheless, knowing that the other was happy in exercising his freedom made him happy. Finally, throughout the separation and despite the speaker's lack of agreement with or participation in his friend's activities, he feels that it was implicit in their relationship that if the other ever needed him, he would be there. It was precisely this combination of granting the friend the freedom to make his own mistakes and not trying to curtail the other's actions, coupled with the implicit understanding that the speaker would be there should he need to depend on somebody, that strengthened the bond between them. In such an established friendship, therefore, leaving the other alone can be evidence of caring.

Having considered one person's views on granting to another individual both privileges and their perceived value in the relationship, let us examine the comments of another who experiences these freedoms in his friendship. Doug remarks

That's why I stick to him. The judgment is not overbearing, his judgment. So he lets me live my life. He'll put his two cents in which I appreciate because I ask him to anyway but then I live my life the way I want to. Whereas I think other people try to control and they get upset if you don't take their advice, whereas he doesn't. He's very accepting.

Both liberties under discussion clearly are operating in this friendship. A primary reason why the speaker continues his attachment to his friend is because the other allows him to live his own life and is "very accepting." Meanwhile, having his activities

monitored by the other and subject to the other's judgments is appreciated, even solicited, as long as the judgments are not "overbearing." He thereby preserves his personal initiative in living while pursuing his life in conscious juxtaposition to another individual's existence. The speaker feels free to depend on the other's opinion when it is necessary. Nevertheless, he would view the other's insistence that he follow the other's advice as attempting to control him and, perhaps, as fostering excessive dependence. This presumably would make the speaker less willing to "stick to him." Once again, one must retain the prerogative of regulating the extent of one's independence from or dependence upon another for a friendship to flourish. Ironically, the two privileges must be granted by the other in the first place.

Freedom To Be Dependent Constrained by Freedom To Be Independent

Due to their opposing natures, exercising the freedoms under consideration does not always produce complementary outcomes; emphasizing one liberty may limit the viability of the other within a given relationship. For example, friends may not typically view an extended absence as a threat to their friendship, but particular or long and repeated separations from each other may lead the friends to question it. Lacking behavioral evidence of the other's affection or availability, a person may become hesitant to depend on that individual. Cindy had the following comments to make about her friendship

Yeah but just those times that when we haven't seen each other in a while. I can remember last summer after not seeing her for quite a while and having something really personal

happen to me, like sort of hesitating to tell her, whereas before I wouldn't have hesitated one bit. (pause) I remember one thing in particular. I didn't tell her for a really, really long time. It was months and months and months and then when I finally told her, it was like so good to get it out, so good to talk to her about it that I wondered why I hadn't ever done it before. But like I said before, the distance thing--when we don't see one another, it cools a little bit.

When friends greatly value the freedom to be dependent, they may respond coolly to extended hiatuses in the relationship. Whereas this woman typically relied on her friend for discussion of personal issues, not being able to depend on her for this period of time engendered a reluctance to confide in her. For a matter of months, the speaker harbored a personal issue that, prior to the separation, she presumably would have felt free to relate. Mutual availability seems to be more essential in this friendship than freedom to decide if one wants to see the other. Consequently, emotional detachment may result from significant separations in such a relationship in which the freedom to be dependent is emphasized more than the freedom to be independent. The actions of the friends thus oscillate between their usual emotional closeness and the emotional distance that follows a breach in their mutually desired pattern of dependence. Says the same person

I actually had guilt feelings because I wasn't able to see Alice more. And I think that she had those same feelings about me. And so when we did get it together, it was awkward. And it takes a few days to get over that awkwardness. But then something'll happen--something will click and then it

will get back on an even keel again. It does that every so often. We'll be very close and then we'll be distant and then we'll be very close again.

These women undergo a transitory emotional distance upon resuming physical proximity. Yet this passing aloofness in a relationship stressing the freedom to be dependent may be the dialectical counterpart of the sustained faith in emotional closeness necessary for experiencing physical distance in a relationship stressing the freedom to be independent. The temporary alienation occurring when the friends are finally able to be together is the enactment of actual feelings encountered when they are forced to be apart. Conversely, the faithfulness described in the counterpart case is the enactment of actual feelings experienced when friends normally able to be together are separated. Both alienation upon coming together and faithfulness when moving apart are possible in close relationships that operate in light of the contradictions entailed by the freedom to be independent/freedom to be dependent.

Freedom To Be Independent Constrained by Freedom To Be Dependent

Neither does continued copresence eliminate tensions resulting from these contrasting privileges. Friends relinquish some autonomy every time they get together. Moreover, they show to varying degrees their desire for connection to the other. This state of affairs is necessary for friendship. Nevertheless, for some people their autonomy as individuals is at least as valuable to them as the tradition of availability that they have established in a friendship with someone else. If one individual becomes too dependent upon another or insists on that person's excessive

availability, this other may feel that his/her voluntary renunciation of autonomy has acquired a compulsory quality that violates the ideally unconstrained nature of their bond.

Yet both friends may still want the friendship to continue. As a result, a functional pattern of copresence and separation may emerge in the friendship, but it will be based upon contradictory assumptions. For a person valuing autonomy, a sufficient amount of time spent apart becomes essential to establishing and enjoying the freedom to be independent and, thus, choice regarding time spent with another. Notes John

Miles and time keep us together, I believe. I believe when you see too much of one person, you're in trouble.

Keith and I don't. We see each other and we have fun together but we're not always together and I think that's what's helped us.

For the reliant person, on the other hand, a sufficient amount of time spent together is necessary for realizing and maintaining the freedom to be dependent. The contrasting nature of the two assumptions can make the negotiation of mutually satisfactory patterns of encounter difficult.

But dependence does not have to be one-sided for tension to ensue. If two friends excessively exercise their freedom to be dependent on each other, their freedom to be independent within the relationship atrophies. On occasion they must deliberately forego their mutual dependence or they will deplete their individual potential for choice in the matter. Should significant restriction of choice occur, the freedom to be dependent becomes a compulsion, thereby blurring the distinction between interaction

that engenders friendship and interaction that consumes it. In the words of Lana

And a lot of times because the relationship was so intense, um I had to get away. You know I had, when we left for the summer, it was like a rejuvenation period for me. And it wasn't that constant (pause) intensity that our relationship has. That's why sometimes when we see each other for a couple days, we have to take a couple days off. You know. Because we take, I mean we, I don't know what it is but we just, we talk about absolutely, y.k., just about everything we feel and that's very intense. And that's, y.k., you can't do that all the time or you go crazy. You know, you end up feeling, y.k., shooting yourself, I think.

This statement suggests that when these friends are together, they are highly receptive to each other's expressions of thoughts and feelings. Being able to speak so freely and in such depth produces and is probably the product of an "intensity." But such an intensity can be as debilitating as it is liberating. One can read her reference to "shooting yourself" metaphorically. She describes aptly, albeit figuratively, the immolation of self as an autonomous individual that either party risks when the freedom to be dependent is exercised to the extent that it becomes a conscription.

And so, the continuous negotiation and enactment of two contradictory liberties appears requisite for maintaining a close friendship. These are the freedom to be independent and the freedom to be dependent, termed conjunctive freedoms for two related reasons. First, each privilege is esteemed in a social relationship only if negotiated in connection with the other. Self only

appreciates the freedom to be independent from another if self retains the option to depend upon that person. Similarly, the freedom to be dependent upon someone else is prized only if self also possesses the license to be autonomous. Second, sharing these two freedoms in combination serves to connect friends. Total independence means no relationship at all, and complete dependence places constraints on both parties inimical to their integrity as individuals. People want their friends to let them do what they want when they want to, yet be there for them to call upon, if needed. According to the subjects' reports, it is therefore the ongoing mutual exchange of some composite of these freedoms that is essential for preserving a bond of close friendship. Individual liberty is thus an inextricable part of close friendship.

Still, the fact that these privileges are based upon mutually contingent choices for both persons produces the possibility of many corruptions. Since these freedoms involve options for self and others, let us consider potential corruptions that may arise.

Ideally, in receiving the freedom to be independent, self is free to act without considering other. Yet two primary restrictions of this liberty are possible. First, to the extent that other does not allow self to act independently, self feels prohibited from acting without considering other. Second, to the degree that other compels self to act independently, self feels obligated to act without considering other. In both cases other's actions obviate self's choice in the matter.

By comparison, in granting the freedom to be independent, other is free to leave self alone. Again, two infringements are conceivable. First, if self refuses to act without considering

other, then other may feel prohibited from allowing self to act independently. Second, if self frequently acts without considering other, then other may feel obligated to allow self to act independently, too. In these two instances other's options are constrained by self's behavior.

Enacting the freedom to be dependent may entail corruptions as well. Theoretically, in receiving the freedom to be dependent, self is free to ask for other's help and support. Nevertheless, there are two potential violations of this privilege. First, if other refuses to provide assistance, self is likely to feel prohibited from asking for help and support. Second, if other demonstrates a possessive need to provide assistance to self, then self may feel obligated to ask other for such aid. Instead of experiencing the freedom to depend on other, self faces a ban in the first case and a duty in the second.

By contrast, in granting to self the freedom to be dependent, other must retain choice in giving help and support. Consequently, there are two possible corruptions of this privilege as well. First, if self is excessively dependent upon other, then other may feel obligated to grant help beyond which he/she wishes to give. Second, should self refuse to rely on other, then other is likely to feel prohibited from granting help. Once again, the behavior of one friend curtails the other's choices.

Perusal of the choices and corruptions arrayed above reveals that independence and dependence are dialectically related and contingent upon both parties' actions. This being so, the appropriate enactment of either type of communicative behavior within a relationship must be continually, though not always explicitly,

negotiated. Whenever a person exercises either liberty within the context of an ongoing friendship, two possibilities ensue. First, since the behavior involves privileges that the friends have jointly created, it may affirm the friendship. On the other hand, since the action can inadvertently curtail the other's options for behaving, thereby violating negotiated prerogatives, it may also threaten the friendship. There are thus relational restrictions upon freedom; neither party can be totally independent or dependent. But limiting both parties' individual liberties makes possible their jointly experienced freedoms. As a result, the friends' "emancipated" actions within a viable relationship, in turn, place boundaries upon each's behavior that constitutes a mutually enacted pattern of functional conduct for them. In Greely's words, "But we encounter in friendship a different kind of trap, a trap that is freely chosen, a trap that oddly enough liberates us more and more" (1970, p. 117).

CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding sections it has been argued that the mutual exchange of two freedoms is necessary in close friendships; these are the freedom to be independent and the freedom to be dependent. First, it was shown how each freedom was depicted in the subjects' statements. Next, comments were examined that revealed how the combination of these contrasting liberties operated to maintain the friendships studied. Basically, self grants to other the freedom to act independently while simultaneously retaining the privilege of calling on self if necessary. Acknowledging that there may be considerable variety in the patterns of enacting the

liberties in different close friendships, two examples were considered. In relationships emphasizing the freedom to be independent, the freedom to be dependent may be restricted. By contrast, if two friends stress the freedom to be dependent, this behavior may constrain their freedom to be independent. The section closed with an overview of the choices and possible corruptions experienced by self and other due to the mutually contingent nature of the contradictory freedoms.

There are obvious limitations to drawing inferences from this study. First of all, the study used a small sample. Also, there was an absence of a formal approach to the data, replicable rules for testing evidence and drawing conclusions, or statistical verification of findings. Of course, such procedures were not in accordance with the assumptions or purposes of the present inquiry. Also, this study reveals more about the informal logics of these subjects' descriptions of their behavior than their actual behavior, the friends' conception of their management of behavior, not observed interaction. There is considerable variety in the correspondence between what people say they do and what people do and what researchers infer they do from what subjects say they do. The conceptual structure identified in this research, however, underpins the actions reported in these cases, and there appeared to be few, if any, exceptions. Consequently, the results of this study are highly suggestive but can only be generalized to this group of friends. Later studies will concentrate on the theoretically pertinent issues of attaining rigorously generalizable findings.

There is, however, a propositional nature to the findings presented here; the dialectic does seem to provide one plausible account of how close friends manage their interaction. Further, it constitutes a theoretical principle that is close to the level of its generative data. As a result, it composes a "disciplined abstraction" (Lofland, 1976) that could prove to be useful in the analysis of other relationships.

NOTES

1. The author would like to thank Arthur P. Bochner for reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this manuscript.
2. This statement is not intended to legislate all aspects of the relationship between friendship and romantic love, e.g. to deny that spouses can be friends or that friends can fall in love. To be sure these are fascinating questions for research and theory development as Brain (1976), Greeley (1970), Lepp (1966) and Phillips and Metzger (1976) have demonstrated. We are only pressing this one distinction between friendship and marriage as ideal types, and suggest that it must have important consequences for the communication of friends which are investigated here. The impact of marriage as a communicative context has received considerable attention elsewhere and is not the specific focus of this study.
3. Studying a relationship with such wide-ranging interpretations and with such varied subjective definitions as close friendship requires that the researcher make some decisions regarding which dyads will participate in his/her research. The second criterion stated above eliminated several possible subjects. Criterion six screened out further potential subjects who, in the author's estimation, obviously did not appear to be close friends. Characteristic statements by such persons were, "Yeah, if I can't get _____, I think I know of someone else who might want to do this with me." or "There's this girl on our softball team who probably would enjoy doing this project together. I

think I'll ask her." In other cases extremely lopsided interpretations of the closeness of the relationship became apparent by talking with both subjects individually during the screening process. These dyads were not used either.

4. This criterion followed Bolton's (1959) recommendations, though the present author never had to invoke this criterion due to the general educational level of the subject pool. See Rawlins (1981).
5. These protocols are rather lengthy and are not included here. They may be found in Rawlins (1981).
6. It must be acknowledged that developing this archive of discourse involved an arbitrary punctuation of each interview's natural flow. Every effort was made, however, to ensure that the meaning of each statement was not radically altered by extrication and that in all cases the entire discussion of interacting with the friend was included.
7. A detailed description of this preliminary analysis may be found in Rawlins (1981).
8. The second dialectic, the dialectic of expressiveness/protectiveness, is reported in Rawlins (1981).
9. Three conventions used in reporting the statements should be indicated, however. First, "y.k." was substituted throughout the quotations for the subjects' frequent interjection of "you know" in their comments. This was done to facilitate the readability of the excerpts. Second, in a few quotations ellipses have been used to indicate the omission of extraneous remarks. Third, all probes are enclosed in parentheses.

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